

This chapter presents background information for the proposed Venice Auxiliary Pumping Plant (VAPP) Project (Proposed Project), including:

- The authority of the lead agency, the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering (LABOE), to prepare this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR);
- The purpose of the environmental review process;
- The scope, content, and intended uses of the Draft EIR;
- Public outreach efforts during the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process;
- Key principles guiding the preparation of this Draft EIR; and
- Related projects considered when analyzing the potential for cumulative environmental impacts.

1.1 Background and Project Overview

The City of Los Angeles (City) owns and operates the Venice Pumping Plant (VPP) (Pump Station No. 646), located at 140 Hurricane Street in the Los Angeles community of Venice. The largest of the City's pumping plants, the VPP is considered a critical facility for conveying sewage. The facility was built in 1957 and expanded and upgraded in 1987. Five backup pumps currently serve the facility. The VPP collects sewage from the City's Coastal Interceptor Sewer (CIS), which serves the communities of Topanga, Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, Venice, and Mar Vista. It also services Santa Monica and parts of Los Angeles County. Sewage from the CIS is pumped south via the VPP to the City's Hyperion Treatment Plant, located in Playa del Rey. Unlike other portions of the City's sewage collection and conveyance system, there are currently no diversions for bypassing the facility or associated CIS for required maintenance or in the event of an emergency. Moreover, the existing VPP is essentially built out and has no additional space for the additional backup pumps and associated equipment required to ensure future system reliability.

During dry-weather flows (when no rain occurs), the two pumps serve the facility and pump about 20 million gallons per day (mgd) of sewage. During wet-weather flows (rain), as much as 50 mgd of sewage may be pumped by the facility, requiring all five pumps to be in operation simultaneously. On several occasions, during extreme weather events (e.g., 1990s and 2000s), the flows exceeded the combined simultaneous pumping capacity of the facility, resulting in near-miss events, which would have required emergency discharges directly to the Grand Canal and Ballona Lagoon or overflows into the surrounding street network. To address these issues, LABOE and LA Sanitation began planning and designing projects that would upgrade and enhance the CIS and VPP (see Chapter 2, Project Description), including the proposed VAPP project.

As currently proposed (see Figure 2-4, Site Plan, in Chapter 2), the VAPP would include construction of an auxiliary pumping facility on two vacant City-owned parcels, located adjacent to the VPP. The new facility would provide additional reliability and be sized to supplement the pumping capacity of the VPP, for a combined ultimate peak-flow capacity of 87 mgd, reflecting wet-weather flows during

a 10-year storm event. The facility would also allow regular service and maintenance activities to occur without creating concern that pumping capacity during these times would not be adequate to handle increased wet-weather flows. With upgraded system redundancy and reliability, the potential for near misses and/or catastrophic system failures during maintenance periods would be reduced.

As part of the Proposed Project, a number of system improvements would be implemented, both above and below ground, including a new electrical building, housing the control system and employee workstations; three new underground and submersed pumps; a backup generator; sewer pipe connections to the CIS, including construction of a diversion structure beneath the Grand Canal; and parking, public art, and open space. Combined, the five existing pumps at the VPP and the three new pumps would have a rated capacity of 87 mgd (i.e., five duty pumps and three standby). All pumps would have a similar capacity and be functionally equivalent. Please see Chapter 2 for a more detailed description of the Proposed Project.

Construction is anticipated to begin in February 2018 and last approximately 2 years.

1.2 Purpose and Intended Use of This EIR

The purpose of this Draft EIR is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the potential environmental impacts that could result from the Proposed Project. An EIR is the most comprehensive form of environmental documentation under CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. It provides the information needed to assess the environmental consequences of a proposed project, to the extent feasible. EIRs are intended to provide an objective, factually supported full-disclosure analysis of the environmental consequences associated with a proposed project that has the potential to result in significant, adverse environmental impacts. An EIR is one of the various decision-making tools used by a lead agency to consider the merits and disadvantages of a project that is subject to its discretionary authority.

CEQA requires the decision-making body to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, or other benefits of the project against the unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the specific economic, legal, social, or other benefits of the project outweigh the unavoidable significant environmental impacts, the significant environmental impacts may be considered acceptable, and the lead agency will adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations (SOC). When the lead agency approves a project that will result in significant impacts, as identified in the EIR, but the impacts are not avoided or substantially lessened, the SOC is the document that contains the specific reasons that support the agency's decision, based on the Final EIR and/or other information in the administrative record. The SOC must be supported by substantial evidence in the record, including findings. In addition, pursuant to Section 21081.6 of CEQA, when approving a project, public agencies must also adopt a mitigation monitoring plan or program for changes that were incorporated into the project or made a condition of project approval to mitigate or avoid significant environmental impacts.

The project owner is LA Sanitation. LABOE is responsible for obtaining the required environmental and planning permits and approvals as well as designing and constructing the Proposed Project. A description of the Proposed Project is provided in Chapter 2 of this Draft EIR.

The Proposed Project requires certain discretionary approvals from the City of Los Angeles and other public agencies (see below and Chapter 2). Therefore, the Proposed Project is subject to environmental review requirements under CEQA.¹ The City of Los Angeles is the lead agency under CEQA for the Proposed Project.

As described in Sections 15121(a) and 15362 of the State CEQA Guidelines, an EIR is an informational document that informs public agency decision-makers and the public of the significant environmental effects of a project, identifies possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describes reasonable alternatives to the project. The purpose of this Draft EIR, therefore, is to focus the discussion on those potential effects of the Proposed Project on the environment that the lead agency has determined may be significant. In addition, feasible mitigation measures are recommended, when applicable, to reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts.

The EIR is prepared by and under the direction of LABOE, which also has primary responsibility for recommending approval of and implementing the Proposed Project. Project approval and certification of the EIR must be considered by the Los Angeles City Council.

As shown in Figure 1-1, EIR Process Overview, an EIR is prepared in three key stages. The CEQA process is initiated when the lead agency identifies a proposed project. The lead agency then normally prepares an Initial Study to identify the preliminary environmental impacts of the Proposed Project. The Initial Study for the VAPP project determined that the Proposed Project could have significant environmental impacts that would require further study and implementation of mitigation measures. Therefore, the lead agency has decided to prepare an EIR. A Notice of Preparation (NOP) is prepared to notify public agencies and the general public that the lead agency is starting the preparation of an EIR for the Proposed Project. The NOP and Initial Study are circulated for a 30-day review and comment period. During this review period, the lead agency requests comments from agencies, interested parties, stakeholders, and the general public on the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the Draft EIR.

Figure 1-1. EIR Process Overview



¹ Public Resources Code Sections 21000–21189.3.

After the close of the 30-day review and comment period, the lead agency continues the preparation of the Draft EIR and associated technical studies (if any). Once the Draft EIR is complete, a Notice of Availability (NOA) is prepared to inform agencies and the general public of the document and the locations where the document can be reviewed. The Draft EIR and NOA are circulated for a 45-day review and comment period to provide agencies and the general public an opportunity to review and comment on the adequacy of the analysis and the findings regarding potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project.

After the close of the 45-day review and comment period, responses to all comments received on the Draft EIR are prepared. The lead agency prepares a Final EIR, which incorporates the Draft EIR or a revision to the Draft EIR, Draft EIR comments and a list of commenters, and responses to comments. In addition, the lead agency must prepare the findings of fact for each significant effect identified; the SOC, if there are significant impacts that cannot be mitigated; and a mitigation monitoring and reporting program to ensure that all proposed mitigation measures are implemented.

The Board of Public Works will consider the Final EIR and make a recommendation to the Los Angeles City Council, as the governing body of the City of Los Angeles, regarding certification of the Final EIR and project approval. The City Council may certify and approve the Final EIR or may choose to not approve the project.

During the environmental review and project approval process, people and/or agencies may address the Board of Public Works and City Council regarding the Proposed Project. Public notification of agenda items for the Board of Public Works are available here:

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<http://lacity.org/city-government/elected-official-offices/city-council/council-calendar>

Within 5 days of project approval, the LABOE will file a Notice of Determination (NOD) with the County Clerk. The NOD will be posted by the County Clerk within 24 hours of receipt. This begins a 30-day statute of limitations on legal challenges to the CEQA approval by the lead agency. The ability to challenge the approval in court may be limited to those persons who objected to the approval of the Proposed Project and issues that were presented to the lead agency by any person in writing during the public review and comment periods regarding the EIR.

The Final EIR is used by the recommending bodies (LABOE) and the final decision-makers (City Council) to weigh the environmental impacts against the benefits of the Proposed Project.

1.3 Scope and Content of the Draft EIR

In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the City prepared an Initial Study (see below), dated November 12, 2015, which identified the topics to be analyzed in the EIR. The Initial Study is contained in Appendix A (Notice of Preparation/Initial Study) of this Draft EIR.

Because the analysis contained in the Initial Study determined that the Proposed Project would result in less-than-significant or no impacts related to agriculture and forestry resources, hazards and hazardous materials, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, and recreation, no further analysis is required in the EIR. Therefore, the focus of this EIR has been limited to the following environmental impact areas:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise and Vibration
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems²
- Energy

It should be noted, however, that the required sections and analysis, per CEQA (see Section 1.5, below), are included in this Draft EIR.

1.3.1 Notice of Preparation/Initial Study

In accordance with Section 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines, LABOE prepared a Notice of Preparation/Initial Study (NOP/IS) for the Proposed Project on November 12, 2015. The NOP was circulated for 30 days. The comment period ended on December 18, 2015. The NOP was also published in the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Argonaut*.

This notice was circulated to members of the public, local and state agencies, and other interested parties to solicit comments on the Proposed Project. Concerns raised in response to the NOP were considered during preparation of this Draft EIR (see Table ES-2 in the Executive Summary of this Draft EIR). The NOP, comment letters received, and Initial Study are presented in Appendix A of this Draft EIR.

² This environmental parameter is addressed in Section 3.7, Hydrology and Water Quality, of this Draft EIR.

The NOP was sent to the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse, for further responsible and trustee agency distribution and issuance of a state identification number, which will be referenced on all subsequent correspondence regarding the project.

The NOP/IS was made available at local public facilities, including the Venice – Abbot Kinney Memorial Branch Library, Lloyd Taber – Marina del Rey Library, and the Playa Vista Branch Library, as well as the LABOE web site, http://eng.lacity.org/techdocs/emg/venice_aux_pumping_plant.htm.

Comment letters regarding the NOP were received from the following agencies, groups, and individuals:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Department of the Army, Los Angeles District)
- California Department of Transportation, District 7
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation
- John Tommy Rosas
- Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
- County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works and Department of Beaches and Harbors
- Steve Bradbury
- Morrill Borassi
- Bob Debiase
- Mike Borassi
- Walter Lamb
- Los Angeles Waterkeeper (Arthur Pugsley)
- McQueen-Whalen Revocable Trust (Daniel P. Whalen and Sharon McQueen)
- Barbara Brunasso
- Clare Bronowski
- Gary Wells
- Michael Rosenfield
- William Boyd

1.3.2 Public Outreach Efforts

To solicit public input on the issues proposed for consideration in the EIR, two scoping meetings were held. The December 3, 2015, meeting was at 6:00 p.m. at Venice Foursquare Church, 1400 Riviera Avenue, Venice, CA 90291. The December 8, 2015, meeting was at 6:00 p.m. at Abbot Kinney Memorial Branch Library, 501 South Venice Boulevard, Venice, CA 90291. The purpose of the scoping meetings was to provide information regarding the Proposed Project and the CEQA process and receive public comments regarding the scope and content of the Draft EIR. The comments made at the scoping meeting included concerns about biological resources, hydrology and water quality, noise, air quality, and traffic (see Appendix A of this Draft EIR).

1.4 Responsible and Trustee Agencies and Project Approvals

Under CEQA, a responsible agency is a public agency, other than the lead agency, that has responsibility to carry out or approve a project (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21069). A trustee agency is a state agency that has jurisdiction by law over natural resources that are held in trust for the people of the State of California (PRC Section 21070).

The following agencies may be required to provide project approvals and/or permits (see also Table 2-1, Required Permits for Venice Auxiliary Pumping Plant in Chapter 2, Project Description, of this EIR):

- City of Los Angeles
- County of Los Angeles
- City of Culver City
- Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
- South Coast Air Quality Management District
- California Coastal Commission
- California Department of Conservation, Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources
- State of California Department of Health Services
- California Office of Historic Preservation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- National Marine Fisheries
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1.5 Organization of the Draft EIR

This Draft EIR conforms to the content requirements stated in Sections 15120 through 15132 of the State CEQA Guidelines. A list of the document's chapters, including and a brief description of their content, is provided here to assist the reader in locating information.

Executive Summary: Located at the front of this document, the Executive Summary provides a brief description of the Proposed Project, including an overview of the impact analysis, recommended mitigation measures, and net residual impact.

Chapter 1: Introduction: The Introduction provides general background information regarding project development and the need for the Proposed Project, along with information regarding the purpose of CEQA and this Draft EIR, including the Draft EIR scoping process; the availability of documents; and the Draft EIR review process.

Chapter 2. Project Description: Chapter 2 presents a statement of the Proposed Project’s objectives, a description of the location and setting of the Proposed Project, a detailed description of the Proposed Project’s physical characteristics, and related information on phasing and implementation.

Chapter 3. Environmental Impact Analysis: This chapter analyzes the potential impacts (direct and indirect) that could occur as a result of implementation of the Proposed Project. The impact discussion is organized by topical issue (i.e., issues that have been found to have the potential to result in significant impacts).

Chapter 4. Comparison of Alternatives: The Comparison of Alternatives includes a discussion of the proposed alternatives and provides the comparative merits of each alternative.

Chapter 5. Other Environmental Considerations: Chapter 5 evaluates the contextual impacts related to growth-inducing effects and cumulative growth. Impacts found not to be significant and unavoidable adverse impacts are also summarized.

Chapter 6. Persons Consulted: This chapter lists those persons who were consulted to obtain the information that was used in the preparation of this Draft EIR.

Chapter 7. List of Preparers: This chapter lists the persons who prepared this Draft EIR.

Chapter 8. References: This chapter lists the sources of information that were referenced for the analyses contained within this Draft EIR.

1.6 Related Projects

In combination with the VAPP, the related projects described below will provide system reliability and redundancy and allow influent flows from the CIS to be bypassed to the Venice Dual Force Main (VDFM) during extreme weather events or an unforeseen emergency.

1.6.1 Venice Dual Force Main

The VDFM is a new 54-inch-diameter force main in the vicinity of the VPP and proposed VAPP. The new pipeline alignment will cross the Grand Canal from the VPP, extend northerly along Hurricane Street to Marquesas Way, then continue southerly along Via Marina before crossing the Marina Del Rey and Ballona Creek channels to the CIS Diversion Structure on Vista del Mar near Waterview Street. The new force main will operate as a parallel system in conjunction with the existing 48-inch force main to meet the peak wet-weather flow demands experienced at the VPP and add operational flexibility and reliability. The City anticipates finishing construction on the VDFM by 2019.

1.6.2 VPP Manifold Replacement Project

The VPP Manifold Replacement Project was recently completed (August 2015) within Hurricane Street. That project consisted of removing the existing manifold structure located within Hurricane Street, between Canal Court and the Esplanade, and installing a new 60-inch steel manifold with connections to the VPP, the existing 48-inch force main, and stub-outs at both ends for connection to the future 54-inch VDFM and planned VAPP.

1.6.3 Venice Pumping Plant Generator Replacement

The project includes demolition of the existing diesel-fueled standby engine/generators and procurement/installation of two new Tier 4 750-kilowatt (kW) generators and one new 1,500 kW generator with ancillary controllers, transfer switches, exhaust and cooling systems, and fluid storage.

Table 1-1 is the related projects list for the Proposed Project.

1.7 Key Principles Guiding Preparation of This Draft EIR

1.7.1 Forecasting

In this Draft EIR, LABOE has made its best effort to predict and evaluate the reasonable, foreseeable, direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives. CEQA does not require LABOE to engage in speculation about impacts that are not reasonably foreseeable (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15144, 15145). In these instances, CEQA does not require a worst-case analysis.

1.7.2 Reliance on Environmental Thresholds and Substantial Evidence

The identification of environmental impacts as significant or less than significant is one of the important functions of an EIR. Although impacts determined to be less than significant need only be acknowledged as such, an EIR must identify mitigation measures for any impact identified as significant. In preparing the document, LABOE has based its conclusions about the significance of environmental impacts on identifiable thresholds, specifically those from the State CEQA Guidelines (Appendix G) and *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide*, and has supported these conclusions with substantial scientific evidence. It should be noted that the thresholds of significance contained within the Draft EIR reflect only those that were not previously eliminated in the Initial Study (see Appendix A of this Draft EIR). As such, only those remaining thresholds not addressed in the Initial Study and derived from CEQA Appendix G and the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* are evaluated.

1.7.3 Disagreement Among Experts

It is possible that evidence that might raise disagreements will be presented during the public review of this EIR. Such disagreements will be noted and will be considered by the decision makers during the public hearing process. In accordance with the provisions of CEQA Guidelines, any conflict of evidence and expert opinions on an issue concerning the environmental impacts of the Proposed Project—when LABOE knows of these controversies in advance—has been identified in the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR has summarized conflicting opinions and included sufficient information to allow the public and decision-makers to make an informed judgment about the environmental consequences of the Proposed Project.

Table 1-1. Related Projects List

	Project Name	Type of Project	Description	Status	Start Date	Completion Date	Distance
1.	Via Dolce Park	Park	Construction of a 6,400-square-foot park adjacent to the Grand Canal.	Planned	8/30/2017	6/1/2018	0.2 mi
2.	Marina Beach General Improvements Project	Beach/Park	Refurbishment of existing restroom building, installation of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades, replacement of covered group picnic shelter/shade structures, resurfacing of waterfront promenade, and installation of bioswale planters.	Planned	1/2017	6/2017	0.37 mi
3.	Via Marina Street Improvement Project	Infrastructure	Roadway resurfacing; curb, gutter, and sidewalk repair; and new landscaping in medians.	Contingent on funding			0.5 mi
4.	Admiralty Way at Via Marina Roadway Project	Infrastructure	Reconfiguration of existing "T" intersection to create additional left-turn pockets. Work to include reconstruction of medians, sidewalks, curbs, and gutters; relocation of catch basins, streetlights, and two bus pads; traffic signal upgrade; and striping.	Contingent on funding			0.4 mi
5.	Venice Dual Force Main	Infrastructure	New 54-inch-diameter force main sewer that will operate as a parallel system in conjunction with the existing 48-inch force main to meet peak wet-weather flow demands experienced at VPP. Valve vaults to be constructed and discharge piping manifold at VPP to be replaced.	Planned	9/2016	11/30/2019	0.0 mi
6.	Washington Boulevard at Venice Canals, Culvert Rehabilitation	Infrastructure	Rehabilitation of five (110-foot by 36-inch) concrete culverts; repair of voids beneath roadway; reconstruction of sidewalks, curbs, and gutters; and street resurfacing.	Planned	3/2/2016	8/31/2016	0.34 mi

	Project Name	Type of Project	Description	Status	Start Date	Completion Date	Distance
7.	Venice Pumping Plant Vibration Rehabilitation, Phase 2	Infrastructure	Rehabilitation to reduce vibration levels at the VPP.	Under Construction	1/13/2016		0.01 mi
8.	Venice Pumping Plant Generators Replacement	Infrastructure	Demolition of existing diesel-fueled standby engine/generators and procurement/installation of two new 750 kW generators and one new 1,500 kW generator with ancillary controllers, transfer switches, exhaust and cooling systems, and fluid storage.	Planned	10/2/2016	1/31/2020	0.01 mi

Source: <http://boe.lacity.org/uprs/report/ProjectInfoReport.cfm?k=5430&dmy=15746>
<http://eng.lacity.org/projects/vpp/VDFM%20FAQ%20Feb%202015.pdf> http://dpw.lacounty.gov/pdd/MarinaDelRey/inc_ProjectMap.cfm
http://dpw.lacounty.gov/pdd/MarinaDelRey/docs/FC_marinadelrey_base3x5.pdf
 Accessed: August 10, 2016.

1.8 Review of the Draft EIR

This Draft EIR will be circulated for review and comments from the public and other interested parties, agencies, and organizations for over 45 calendar days, beginning on October 27, 2016, and closing on December 15, 2016. A public meeting on the Proposed Project will be held on November 17, 2016, at the Venice Foursquare Church. A notice regarding the public review period and time and location for the meeting will be published in the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Argonaut* prior to the public hearing date.

During the public comment period, all comments or questions about the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Dr. Jan Green Rebstock, Environmental Supervisor II
 Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering
 Environmental Management Group
 1149 South Broadway, Suite 600, Mail Stop 939
 Los Angeles, CA 90015-2213
 Email: jan.green.rebstock@lacity.org

Following public review of the Draft EIR, a Final EIR will be prepared in response to comments received during the public review period. The Board of Public Works will consider the project and make recommendations to the Los Angeles City Council, the governing body of the City of Los Angeles, regarding certification of the Final EIR and project approval. The City Council may certify and approve the Final EIR or may choose not to approve the project.

The Final EIR will be available for public review at least 10 days prior to its certification (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(b)). All responses to comments submitted on the EIR by public agencies will be provided to those agencies at least 10 days prior to final action on the project. The City Council will make findings regarding the extent and nature of the impacts, as depicted in the Final EIR.

During the environmental review and project approval process, people and/or agencies may address the Board of Public Works and City Council regarding the Proposed Project. Public notification of agenda items for the Board of Public Works is available here:

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